Procurement of foodgrains

†1676. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the States have refused to accept the responsibility of official procurement of foodgrains despite offer of various facilities and financial aid by Government;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, the manner in which Government propose to decentralize the procurement of foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) and (b)The State Governments of West BengaJ, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have already started procurement of foodgrains under the scheme of decentralized procurement. The State Government of Tamil Nadu has also expressed -its willingness to start decentralized procurement. However, some State Governments have expressed reservations with regard to decentralized procurement due to lack of infrastructure, shortage of funds and lack of trained and experienced manpower.

(c) As decided by the Government, the scheme of decentralized procurement would not be imposed on any State against its wishes and the present arrangement of procurement of foodgrains would continue where States are not yet prepared to shift to a decentralized system of procurement. In order to persuade the State Governments to undertake decentralized procurement, Government has initiated several measures for creation of infrastructure in the shape of godowns, timely and adequate sanction of Cash Credit Limit by the RBI and timely reimbursement of subsidy.

Wrongful confinement of maid servant

1677. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH 'SURYA' : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an IFS officer was charged for wrongful confinement and torture etc. of his maid servant when he was posted in Paris some years ago;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the latest update of the case; and

(c) whether any action has been taken against either of them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Possibility of Nuclear War

1678. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the recent stand off with Pakistan, there is a possibility of a nuclear war and the threat from chemical and biological weapons is now a reality; and

(b) if so, the steps Government are taking to protect the fighting forces and public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Pakistan has, on several occasions including during the recent standoff, averred rejection of the doctrine of no-first-use of nuclear weapons. The implications of such a policy are self-evident.

In addition to reports about alleged violations of international instruments banning chemical and biological weapons, risks of access by non-State actors and terrorists to these weapons of mass destruction have also surfaced in recent years.

(b) Government continues to closely monitor all developments related to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes, as also possible threats from use of chemical and biological weapons, and remains fully committed to take all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interests

TerroristTraining Camps in Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir

1679. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that terrorist training camps are still runing in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir despite the fact that General Musharraf had promised to close them permanently;